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Clinical features associated with diagnostic stool tests, FoodNet Population Survey (2000-2003)

Biography:

Elaine Scallan is a senior epidemiologist with the Foodborne Active Diseases Network (FoodNet), in the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Her main areas of focus are determining the burden of foodborne diseases and attributing foodborne illness to specific foods. She has a PhD in Epidemiology from the Department of Public Health Medicine and Epidemiology, University College, Dublin, Ireland.

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Background: As described in IDSA practice guidelines for the management of infectious diarrhea, diagnostic testing of stool specimens is important for the clinical management of patients and surveillance for foodborne pathogens. To estimate more precisely the human health burden of foodborne diseases, the factors associated with the submission of diagnostic stool specimens must be understood.

Methods: To identify factors associated with seeking medical care and submitting a stool specimen among persons with diarrhea, we used multivariable logistic **regression to**

analyze data from two 12-month population-based telephone surveys conducted in the Foodborne Diseases Surveillance Network (FoodNet) sites between 2000 and 2003.

Results: Of 31,082 persons interviewed, 2,127 self reported acute diarrhea; 16% sought medical care for their symptoms. Of these, 18% provided a stool specimen. On multivariate analysis, factors associated with seeking medical care included low household income (<\$25,000), age <5 or ≥65 years and having bloody diarrhea, vomiting, fever, coughing, sneezing or diarrhea duration ≥3 days. When adjusted for age and season, bloody diarrhea (Odd ratio [OR] 3.0; 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.0-9.4) and duration of diarrhea ≥3 days (OR 5.1; 95% CI: 2.0-12.9) were the most important factors associated with being requested to provide a stool specimen for bacterial culture.

Conclusions: In accordance with IDSA guidelines, bloody diarrhea and diarrhea duration are the main criteria used to select the patients requested to provide a stool specimen.

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